

REMARKS

35 USC § 102(b)/103

Claims 9-14 remained rejected under 35 USC § 102(b)/103 as being anticipated by and in the alternative obvious over Rudolph (U.S. Pat. No. 4,161,393). The Applicant appreciates the examiner's detailed explanation and reasoning, however, respectfully disagrees in view of the amendments herein.

More specifically, claim 9 as amended herein expressly requires a step of obtaining data that indicate that when the second portion is combined with the first shift reactor effluent, steam consumption in the first and second shift reactors and condensate formation in the second shift reactor effluent is reduced as compared to a plant operating without the step of bypassing the second portion around the first shift reactor. Rudolph fails to teach such step. Indeed, cooler 26 is likely to increase condensate. Moreover, it is noted that the teaching of Rudolph as a whole is concerned with a pre-processing cooling to so remove via condensation heavy hydrocarbons, which increases catalyst life time.

Regarding the office's assertion that Rudolph would teach a reduction of steam, it is noted that this teaching can not be taken out of context. In fact, such teaching is expressly premised on the use of humidification as can be taken from "... The addition of steam can be avoided or much reduced *if the raw gas* produced by the pressure gasification of coal *is saturated with water vapor* before it is fed to the shift conversion equipment..." Thus, the examiner's argument is not persuasive.

35 USC § 103(a)

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Rudolph in view of Schmid (U.S. Pat. No. 4,159,236). The Applicant again respectfully disagrees.

With respect to Rudolph, the same considerations and arguments as discussed above apply and are therefore not reiterated here. While the applicant agrees that Schmid teaches an acid gas removal unit to produce a fuel gas, Schmid fails to remedy the defects in Rudolph as

pointed out above. Consequently, the rejection of claim 15 as being obvious over Rudolph in view of Schmid should be withdrawn.

REQUEST FOR ALLOWANCE

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application with claims 1-8 being withdrawn. The applicant requests allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,
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